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A

V I E W

OF THE STATE OF

SCHOOL-EDUCATION

IN

I R E L A N D:

WHEREIN

THE NUMEROUS ERRORS AND DEFECTS

OF THE

PRESENT SYSTEM,

ARE FULLY EXPOSED;

AND

THE NECESSITY OF ADOPTING

A NEW ONE,

CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED.

WITH A

SKETCH OF A PLAN FOR THAT PURPOSE.

By THOMAS SHERIDAN, A. M.

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A

V . I E W

OF THE STATE OF

SCHOOL EDUCATION, &c.

AS the present state of education, in this country, is, for the first time, shortly to be made an object of parliamentary investigation, according to some votes passed last sessions, in the house of commons, it is not to be doubted but that they will pay such attention to it, as the importance of the subject demands; and surely there never was any offered to their consideration, of a more interesting nature, particularly with regard to the rising and future generations.

Mr. Locke, in his Essay on Education, has the following passage—"The well-educating of their children, is so much the duty and concern of parents, and the welfare and prosperity of the nation so much depend on it, that I would have every

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one lay it seriously to heart ; and after having well examined and distinguished what fancy, custom, or reason advises in this case, to set his helping-hand to promote every where that way of training up youth, with regard to their several conditions, which is the easiest, shortest, and likeliest to produce virtuous, useful, and able men in their distinct callings ; though that most to be taken care of is the *Gentleman's* calling : for if those of that rank are, by their education, once set right, they will quickly bring the rest into order." A sketch of such a plan is the author of the present tract about to lay before the public, chiefly calculated to point out the right method of training those of the first rank, or as Mr. Locke styles it " the *Gentleman's* calling ;" tho' it may afterwards, with suitable alterations, be extended to the subordinate classes of the community at large. But, as there is no subject which has been less considered, and about which such erroneous opinions have been entertained, and such rooted prejudices implanted from early years, (for prejudices of education are, proverbially, the most inveterate of any) it will

will be necessary to clear away those mists of error before the plan can be seen in it's true light.

For this purpose, the first step to be taken is, to examine the present established mode of teaching in our schools, from the first elements of instruction given to children, to their final completion there; to see whether there are any errors to be corrected, or deficiencies to be supplied. For any fault left unamended there, like errors in the first concoction, must carry an incorrigible taint throughout.

Upon a candid examination it will appear that the whole method is fundamentally wrong: that the course, in what is taught, is erroneous in the whole, and all its parts; and the omissions of certain articles are of such a nature, as to prevent the cultivation of those powers and faculties of the human mind, which may at once be of the greatest benefit to society in general, and the brightest ornament to individuals.

Let us, therefore, take an impartial view of the general method of instructing children from their early childhood.

The great instrument used in cultivating all the powers of the human mind, is language; without the use of which, men could rise but little above the degree of brutes; and without the right use of which, they are liable to fall into perpetual errors.

In all the countries of the world where there are any institutions established for the instruction of youth, language is the instrument made use of for that purpose; as it would be impossible, without it, that any communication of ideas or sentiments could be carried on.

Language in its more general acceptation, may be divided into two sorts; speech and writing. The former, the gift of God to all mankind; the latter, the invention of man. The former, the only one used over the whole face of the globe, during a vast period of the world's existence. The latter, comparatively of late invention, was introduced only into a few countries, and cultivated, for the most part, only by a small number of the natives.

Very different uses were made of this artificial language, by the different nations
into

into which the use of letters was introduced.

In some, who had been long employed in cultivating the living speech, in reducing it to the utmost regularity, precision, refinement, and elegance, communicated only by *vivâ voce* instruction and example; the chief use made of letters, was, to give stability to sound, and permanence to thought; to arrest ideas as they rose in the mind, and clothe them in forms that might render them obvious to the sight; in order that the noble works of their poets and orators might have a fixed existence, no longer liable to the uncertainty of oral tradition, and that they might be presented to the eye in other regions, to which no voice could reach. This was the case of the ancient Greeks; who allowed that they were indebted to Barbarians for the introduction of letters among them, but boasted that they alone knew how to make a right use of them. The Romans afterwards copied them in this, but not till after the Greek rhetoricians had been settled among them, and pointed out the way.

These were the only nations of the ancient world that adopted this course. In all the others the living speech was wholly neglected, and left to take its natural course; while the knowledge and use of letters was confined to a particular order of men, who never suffered the multitude to have their minds illuminated, as it was to their blind ignorance, and the consequent veneration in which the order was held, from an opinion entertained of their superior knowledge, that the priesthood were indebted for the ascendant they had over the body of the people, in all matters whether religious or political. And thus it was that the most absolute and cruel despotism was exerted, for many centuries, over most of the nations of Europe, by papal and sacerdotal usurpation.

Upon the revival of ancient literature, a new æra began in many of the European countries. There was discovered such a vast treasure of knowledge, and such a fund of delight in the writings of antiquity, that the laity no longer suffered the clergy to be the sole possessors and dispensers of such valuable funds, but claimed an equal

equal right to a participation of them. The avidity with which the study of the dead languages was pursued by both orders, became in time pretty general. But very different were the effects produced by these studies, in the different nations where they were established. In some, after perceiving the order, regularity, elegance, and various beauties of the revived languages, they set about to new model their own, according to the bright patterns set before them; to enrich them from their copious stores, and to regulate, ascertain, and refine them as far as their several natures would admit.

This was the more easily done among those nations, whose language was a mixture of the ancient Latin, with their own vernacular speech; and therefore had it's origin, and made it's greatest progress in Italy; though afterwards the example was followed by France and Spain.

On the other hand, the northern nations, finding but little affinity between their own and the revived languages, applied themselves solely to the study of the latter, leaving

ing their own to make what progress it could in its natural course.

Unfortunately the English, who might have had the choice of which of these two examples they should follow, from their nearer affinity to the manners, customs, and governments of the northern nations, than to those of the south, adopted the methods pursued by the former; and taking it for granted, without examination, that their language was of the same rude nature with those of their northern neighbours, and that it was infected by the same barbarisms, they thought it not worth cultivating, and like them left it wholly to chance.

Thus all the institutions and endowments of schools and colleges, throughout the British realms, have uniformly pursued the same course, which was begun in the reign of Henry the Eighth, by making the study of the Greek and Roman languages their chief object, without the smallest regard to our own. And in that state do they continue to this day.

Now let us see whether the fact be so, by a fair statement of the whole process of instruction given to children, from the
time

time that the primer is first put into their hands, to that of finishing their studies at school.

When a boy can speak tolerably plain, which is usually at about four or five years of age, he is put under the tuition of some one to teach him his letters, then to spell and put syllables together, so as to form them into words. When he has got so far as to be able to give a ready utterance to common words at sight, he is thought to be sufficiently prepared for the grammar school.

The whole object of these schools is to teach their pupils the two dead languages; and according to the methods there pursued, at least seven, but often eight or nine years are employed before they are reckoned fit to enter the college; where the greater part of four years more is taken up in perfecting them in those two languages. When we find that twelve or thirteen years of the prime of life are thus occupied, we should at first be apt to imagine that some great end was to be answered by it; and that the mastery of these two languages was essentially necessary to qualify the youth, so
trained

trained, to make a figure in life, and to fit them for the several stations, offices, and professions, which they are to sustain when they enter into the world. But what must our astonishment be, when upon examination we find, that with respect to much the larger portion of boys trained in this way, I mean such whose education terminates with what they can acquire of school learning, without proceeding to the collegiate course, the whole of that precious time has been utterly lost, in endeavouring to obtain an acquisition which can never be of the least use or ornament to them as long as they live; and which, when they enter into the world, is, on that account, wholly neglected by them, and in a few years utterly obliterated from their memories. And with regard to those who may reap some benefit from it, all the knowledge that can be of real use, may be obtained in a fourth part of the time now employed in those studies, by pursuing a different mode of instruction.

What is the chief use of acquiring any language? Is it not to be able to speak or to write it? And yet after the labour of so many

many years; after the prime of life has been spent in the acquisition of the two dead languages, they who have made the greatest proficiency in them, will never have an opportunity of conversing or writing in either of them during the rest of their lives. How such close application to the study of these came to be first introduced, and continued to be the chief part of education to this hour, is well worth the enquiry; as it will shew that though our ancestors were wise in choosing the method of education established in their days, as best suited to the circumstances of the times; yet we are very unwise in persevering in the same system, when times and circumstances are so much changed.

The time of establishing a general system of education in England, was not till after the revival of the ancient languages of Greece and Rome. Previous to that period, our schools and colleges were almost wholly occupied by such as were destined to the function of the Priesthood; and what little learning and knowledge were then in the kingdom, seem to have been pretty much monopolized by that order. The

Laity

Laity were in general so illiterate, that many even of the nobility and gentry could neither read nor write. Our language was then so rude and barbarous, that few books were written in it which were either fit for entertainment or use; consequently there could be no inducement to the study of it: nor was this state peculiar to our country; all the neighbouring nations were in the same predicament. When the Goths and Vandals had put an end to the language, as well as the empire of the Romans, the barbarous manners and speech of those rude nations, either supplanted or corrupted the more polished Roman, in all places where they made settlements; and the greatest part of Europe was reduced almost to the lowest state of barbarism, in which it remained during many ages. At length, in the fifteenth century, the languages of old Greece and Rome, had, as it were, a resurrection from the tombs in which they had so long been buried. This was owing to the inundation of Barbarians and Turks which had over-run Greece, whose dispersed inhabitants furnished all the countries in Europe with masters. As these

these languages were the repositories of all the knowledge and wisdom of antiquity, no wonder they were made the chief object of education. It was by the study of these alone, that knowledge could then be acquired. There were as yet no translations into our language of the ancient authors; and indeed it was so very defective, that it was not capable of giving any just or satisfactory idea of them. Besides, there were at that time many other motives and inducements to the general study of those languages, both of necessity and use, which do not hold now. After the writings of Luther and Calvin had appeared, all Europe was embroiled in religious disputes, in which we were necessarily involved by our secession from the Church of Rome. None of the modern languages were sufficiently refined or fixed to become of general use. As it was necessary to the several combatants of the different nations, that some one language, understood by all, should be pitched upon, in which they should manage their controversy, the Latin was chosen by common consent as best adapted to the purpose, and obtained a general

neral currency. On this account that language was then spoke and written by all the learned in Europe, as generally as the French is now by the politer part of the world. A knowledge of the Greek was also necessary, as the new testament, which contained the subjects of controversy, and furnished them chiefly with materials to support it, was written in that language. As the interests and passions of Princes and of parties mingled themselves in these contests, men of the greatest abilities and most distinguished talents were of course favoured and encouraged by them, to be champions in the cause which they espoused. There were no other roads open to the temples of fame and Fortune, but through Latin and Greek; and whoever had either of those objects in view, must necessarily pass through those, whatever expence of time or labour it might cost them. At that time, the laws were in Latin; the service of the church in Latin; in that language the well-educated of both sexes conversed, and the writings of the learned were all in that language. The laity being now freed from the tyrannical power exercised over their

their minds by the clergy, which was chiefly supported by an opinion of superior knowledge and learning in that order, were resolved not to be inferior to them in those points, and therefore greedily embraced the same method of education. Thus it happened that all persons whatever, designed for professions ever so different, ecclesiastical, civil, or military; the pulpit, senate-house, bar, physic, or army, were all trained exactly in one and the same way. To understand, speak, and write Latin well, as the language by which they could acquire the most knowledge, and which would be of the greatest use to them in life, was of course the universal study: while their own, which, on account of its poverty could only serve them in the common offices of life, was little regarded.

To state the account, in short, between our forefathers and us, they shewed great wisdom and good sense in making the learned languages the chief study in their days, because, however round-about the way, knowledge was then to be acquired in none other. Private persons were in the right to labour at perfection in those, because

cause they were sure of meeting suitable rewards, both in point of reputation and fortune. But the very same motives which urged them so powerfully to apply to Latin and Greek, are now more cogent with us to study chiefly our own language. Because a greater quantity of useful knowledge can, with more ease, and in much less time, be acquired in that, than in any, I had almost said, all the others; as the English is now become a universal magazine, not only of all ancient, but of all modern wisdom. And it need scarce be mentioned, that no skill in other languages can contribute in any degree either to the fame, profit, or amusement of the natives of this country, in whatever situation of life they may be, as in their own.

Let us now see what reasons are offered for continuing the same course, when the same causes no longer subsist. They are chiefly two:

First, That it is the best way to acquire the knowledge of our own language.

Secondly, That great benefits arise from reading the ancient authors in the originals.

Let

Let us candidly examine these reasons, and see whether they are founded.

As to the first, that of acquiring a more perfect knowledge of our own language in this way.—Is the fact so? There are few schools in these realms which may not bear testimony to the contrary. In those it is a common observation that boys are able to write tolerable good exercises in Latin, who at the same time cannot express their thoughts with the least propriety or grace in their native tongue; and it is a well-known fact, that their sisters, of the same age, far excel them in the only style of English composition they apply to, that of letter-writing. That few ever after in life attain any great degree of perfection in their own language, nothing can more clearly evince, than the number of inaccuracies, solecisms, and even grammatical errors, to be seen scattered through the works of some of our most celebrated authors; whereof Dr. Lowth, in his Grammatical Institutes, and Dr. Blair, in his Lectures, have furnished us with abundance of instances.

The few rules of general grammar from the Latin, which square with our tongue,

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might be taught to a boy in less than a week ; and all that are peculiar to ourselves, and which constitute its idiomatic difference from others, of which we now know little or nothing, might be completely learned in a month, were a right method of teaching it once opened. Why should we suppose that Latin grammar will sufficiently instruct us in our own, when it can be but of little use towards acquiring that of the French, Italian, or Spanish tongues, which have so much greater affinity with it? When we would obtain a knowledge of any of these, are we not obliged to have recourse to their several grammars, which point out the specific difference in each? And is there not the same reason that we should do so by our own?

But, say the pedants, as the words in our language are chiefly derived from the Latin, we ought to learn the mother-tongue, in order to understand their meaning the better. Now in this they only shew their ignorance of the state of our language ; for most of the words of Latin origin were not transplanted directly into our tongue, but through the medium of the

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the French; and therefore it would be much more to the purpose to study the French with that view, than the Latin; especially as there is a much greater affinity between them, both with regard to grammar, and phraseology. But neither of them can by any means give an accurate and precise knowledge of the meaning of our words. Such as stand for simple ideas, if not first understood in our own, can never be made clear by the terms used in any other languages. And such as are marks of complex ideas, when adopted into ours, seldom retain the same exact meaning as in the originals.

If this argument holds good with regard to the Latin, why should it not be equally conclusive with respect to all the other languages from which ours is derived? In that case, what a number should we have to study! Half a life might be spent in this circuitous way, and at the end we should find ourselves just at the point where we first set out; that is, in order to have an accurate and critical knowledge of our own, we must enter upon the study of it from its first rudiments, and scrutinize

the whole with the same degree of attention, as if we had never known any other; nay probably with more, as many bad habits may have been taught, and idiomatic phrases and expressions from other tongues, imperceptibly take place in the minds of such linguists, to the exclusion of their own. Of this we have a striking instance in the works of the late Mr. Harte, author of the life of Gustavus Adolphus, and travelling tutor to young Stanhope; of whom Lord Chesterfield says in one of his letters, that in his writing you may find Græcisms, Latinisms, Hebræisms, Gallicisms, and all sorts of *isms*, except Anglicisms.

But to place the whole of this argument in a clear light, by an obvious instance—Suppose a parent wanted to have his son taught French, and should apply to one of our pedagogues to know which was the best and shortest way of attaining it. Why, says the pedagogue, as the French is a derived language, you must first send him to the grammar school to learn Latin and Greek. How long must he continue there? Why, not above seven or eight years; and then he will be qualified to enter upon
French.

French. Oh, but says a stander-by, if you send your son to France, he may, by regular instruction there, become master of it in a year or two, according to his capacity; nor would his knowledge of Latin and Greek, such as he should get at school, put him forward one week.

As to the second motive assigned for still continuing such severe application to the study of ancient literature, I mean the benefit arising from reading their authors in the original, I believe the arguments, when fairly examined, will prove equally futile.

The classics are usually taught at an age when the pupils cannot possibly be judges either of the matter or style of the writers; and therefore all that is required of them is to be able to construe the words, that is, turn them into such English as they know, or find in their dictionary. Now nothing can contribute more to degrade and place in a false light the beautiful ideas of those writers, than the method of literal translation, or, as Milton phrases it, *lamentable construction*, practised in our schools.

The poor boys, utterly unacquainted with the elegance of diction in their own language,

language, and having no words but such as are in common use, are necessarily confined to those in construing their lessons ; by which the very meaning is for the most part perverted, and the spirit of the original entirely lost. But, were they first taught the rudiments of grammar, as common sense directs they should be, in their own tongue ; were they made to read and understand our best writers, in a gradual succession, according to the improvement of their several capacities, before they entered upon Latin ; and ever after were the study of the two languages to go hand in hand, and lessons given alternately in authors of similar genius, and books written on similar subjects, they would then be no longer confined to verbal translation, but would be able to render the meaning of the original in apposite and correspondent phraseology ; whereas, by the other method of proceeding, most boys, never having had any pleasure in reading those authors, but rather having contracted a disgust to them, through the long drudgery they were obliged to undergo, by the compulsory method of teaching them ; and, after all, finding
that

that they could be of no manner of use to them, as soon as it is in their power, throw them aside, and never look into them afterwards during the rest of their lives. For the truth of this I appeal to the consciousness of almost every reader bred in this way. A few indeed of brighter parts, may have acquired such a knowledge of those languages, as to read their authors in the original with pleasure; but I verily believe, taking the schools round through the whole realm, not one in a hundred ever arrives at that degree of perfection. And surely it is paying too high a price for the purchase, that the sons of noblemen, gentlemen, tradesmen, farmers, and mechanics, should be chained together like galley slaves, on their different benches, and whipped too, like them, during the space of seven or eight years, in order that one in a hundred, when set free, may enjoy the solitary delight of reading the classics in the original with a higher relish.

Though all that has been hitherto advanced, with regard to our present mode of School-education, has its foundation in uncontrovertible truth; yet, as it has to
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encounter the rooted prejudice of centuries, before I proceed any farther, I think it necessary to support my arguments by the authority of one of the wisest and most clear-sighted of men ; I mean the great Mr. Locke, who, in treating of this subject, has the following passage :

‘ To write and speak correctly, gives a
 ‘ grace, and gains a favourable attention
 ‘ to what one has to say ; and since ’tis
 ‘ English that an English gentleman will
 ‘ have constant use of, that is the language
 ‘ he should chiefly cultivate, and wherein
 ‘ most pains should be taken to polish and
 ‘ perfect his style. To speak or write bet-
 ‘ ter Latin than English, may make a man
 ‘ be talked of ; but he will find it more to
 ‘ his purpose to express himself well in his
 ‘ own tongue, that he uses every moment,
 ‘ than to have the vain commendation of
 ‘ others for a very insignificant quality.
 ‘ This I find universally neglected, nor no
 ‘ care taken any where to improve young
 ‘ men in their own language, that they
 ‘ may thoroughly understand and be mas-
 ‘ ters of it. If any one among us have a
 ‘ facility or purity more than ordinary in
 his

' his mother tongue, it is owing to chance,
 ' or his genius, or any thing rather than his
 ' education, or the care of his teacher.
 ' To mind what English his pupil speaks
 ' or writes, is below the dignity of one
 ' bred up amongst Greek and Latin, though
 ' he have but little of them himself. These
 ' are the learned languages, fit only for
 ' learned men to meddle with and teach :
 ' English is the language of the illiterate
 ' vulgar ; though yet we see the polity of
 ' some of our neighbours hath not thought
 ' it beneath the public care to promote and
 ' reward the improvement of their own
 ' language. Polishing and enriching their
 ' tongue is no small business amongst them ;
 ' it hath colleges and stipends appointed it,
 ' and there is raised among them a great
 ' ambition and emulation of writing cor-
 ' rectly ; and we see what they are come to
 ' by it, and how far they have spread one
 ' of the worst languages possibly in this
 ' part of the world, if we look upon it as
 ' it was in some few reigns backwards,
 ' whatever it be now. The great men
 ' among the Romans were daily exercising
 ' themselves in their own language ; and
 we

‘ we find yet upon record the names of
 ‘ orators who taught some of their Empe-
 ‘ rors Latin, though it were their mother
 ‘ tongue.

‘ ’Tis plain the Greeks were yet more
 ‘ nice in theirs; all other speech was bar-
 ‘ barous to them but their own, and no
 ‘ foreign language appears to have been
 ‘ studied or valued amongst that learned
 ‘ and acute people, though it be past a
 ‘ doubt that they borrowed their learning
 ‘ and philosophy from abroad.

‘ I am not here speaking against Greek
 ‘ and Latin: I think they ought to be stu-
 ‘ died, and the Latin at least, understood
 ‘ well by every Gentleman. But whatever
 ‘ foreign languages a young man meddles
 ‘ with (and the more he knows the better)
 ‘ that which he should critically study, and
 ‘ labour to get a facility, clearness, and
 ‘ elegance to express himself in, should be
 ‘ his own, and to this purpose he should be
 ‘ daily exercised in it.’

As it may be thought, from what has
 hitherto been offered, that the value of the
 dead languages has been too much depre-
 ciated, nay, that the study of them might
 be

be wholly omitted, without any great detriment; I think it necessary here to explain myself fully on this head, by declaring, that my sentiments exactly coincide with those of Mr. Locke, where he says—

‘ I am not here speaking against Greek and

‘ Latin; I think they ought to be studied,

‘ and the Latin at least, understood well by

‘ every Gentleman.’ It is not with the

institution itself of learning those lan-

guages that I quarrel, but with the mode

of teaching them; by which such a vast

portion of time, at the most important sea-

son of life, is utterly wasted to answer no

one good purpose in the world. The pre-

sent method of teaching them, is indivi-

dually the same that it was on the revival

of those languages in the reign of Henry

the Eighth. At that period, this method,

whatever expence of labour and time it

might cost, was not only right, but indis-

pensibly necessary for reasons already

assigned; because knowledge was no other

way to be attained; because all well edu-

cated persons then conversed in Latin, and

no writings were of any value but in that

language; and because there were no other

ways

ways open to fame and preferment. Is that the case now? Are there any who at present converse in Latin? Are the best modern compositions in that language, known at all in the world? For one reader of Gray's Latin Poems, esteemed as master-pieces by a few scholars, are there not a thousand admirers of his English Poetry? Is not a mastery of our tongue, both in speaking and writing, the surest road now to fame and preferment? Why then all that time utterly thrown away in Latin excercises? the absurd method of proceeding in which, is almost beyond belief. When they have scarce a glimmering of the language, the young pupils are set about performances which require invention and judgment, before either the store-house of the memory is supplied with materials of any kind, except a few words; or the understanding enlightened or exercised. Such a grossly erroneous practice cannot better be exposed, than by a representation of the behaviour of the poor boys on this occasion (set, like the Israelites by their Egyptian task-masters, to make brick without straw) who generally apply to those in the
upper

upper classes, addressing them in this ridiculous phrase—" Pray give me a little sense"—and when their want is supplied their business is to turn it into bald Latin. Nor is this the most absurd part of the exercises established at the principal of the public schools in England. The extravagant attempt to force all to be poets in spite of nature; of having four exercises out of five in Latin verse; of obliging all of the same class to write the same number of verses, whatever difference there may be in point of genius and capacity; are practices so opposite to common sense, that it is wonderful how they still keep footing in an age which calls itself enlightened. To answer this end, what a length of time is lost in learning the rules of Latin prosody! which are so far from leading to a true knowledge of it, that they infallibly mislead into the grossest errors. The feet which compose the metre of their poetic numbers, are made out of a certain proportion of long and short syllables; the long syllables among the ancients, as we are assured by all writers upon that subject, taking up just double the time in sounding them, that the short ones did.

Now

Now as we pronounce the Latin words in the same manner as we do the English, we frequently found those syllables which were pronounced long by the Romans, in the shortest possible time, and so *vice versa*, to the total confusion of all quantity. So the whole use of this laborious application to the intricate system of their prosody, is calculated solely for those who are to write Latin verses; that they may be able to arrange to the eye the long and short syllables in metre, in the same order that the Roman poets did; any deviation from which would be called by the prosodians a false quantity, though the ear either acknowledges no difference at all, or, for the most part, finds the sound in direct opposition to the rule. For it is well known to all skilled in this prosody, that it is only in some of the middle syllables of words, that the different sounds of the long and short vowels are perceived by the ear; and the rules for the right pronounciation of these might easily be learned in a week: whereas it requires the study and practice of years to arrive at an accurate knowledge and use of the other. And *cui bono?* That the most forward boys may gain a reputation

putation among their school-fellows, for what Mr. Locke very justly calls an insignificant talent, which they will never after have an opportunity of displaying.

When this close attention to prosody was first instituted, it was founded on good sense; because no other poetry but Latin was held in any estimation among the several nations of Europe, on account of the poverty or barbarisms of their several tongues; and all who excelled in this way obtained celebrity, not only at home, but over all Europe, such as Vida, Sannazarius, Buchannan, &c. But, in the name of common-sense, why do you still persist in the same course, when no one purpose, either of use or ornament, can be answered by it? on the contrary, when one very prejudicial effect is produced from it, I mean a total corruption of the ear; for, when boys are taught to call those syllables long that are short, and those syllables short that are long, all ideas of real quantity are confounded; and the whole of these fantastic rules seems to be founded, not on the nature of things, but merely caprice. The young ear, thus tyrannized
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over by arbitrary rules, never after recovers its liberty to judge for itself; the bad effects of which are but too visible in the several attempts made to lay open the principles of English prosody, in which the prejudices imbibed by the writers from the Latin, have led them into the grossest errors, and all their ill-founded systems have tumbled to the ground. All benefit arising from either speaking or writing that language being out of the question, the only remaining subject is to understand it well, so as to be able to read the classics in the original: and this end, I will undertake to say, may be fully answered by a different method of teaching it, in a fourth part of the time now employed in the present course. That the reader may not think this assertion too extravagant, I shall state a parallel case: It is well known by all who apply themselves to the study of French, that in a short space of time, in many cases not exceeding a few months, they acquire a sufficient knowledge of the language to read their authors with pleasure in the original; and in a year or two, with the same facility and clearness of comprehension.

comprehension as they find in reading their own. Now, as the French is upon the whole a more difficult language than the Latin, why may not a knowledge of the latter be obtained even in a shorter space of time than the former, where the sole object is to understand them well? But if the learner would carry his wishes still farther, and endeavour to arrive at such a degree of perfection as to write French with accuracy, it will cost him the labour of years. Yet surely his time and pains would be much better bestowed in obtaining a mastery of a living tongue, now become almost universal, and which he would find both highly useful and ornamental to him in whatever part of the globe he may chance to visit, as well as in his own country, than in acquiring the most perfect knowledge of a dead language, wholly banished from the world, and imprisoned in schools and cloisters.

Having sufficiently pointed out the fundamental errors of our present course, in wasting such a length of time on the dead languages, I shall now shew the necessity
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there is for making the study and perfect mastery of our native speech, a chief object in the education of youth, in order to cultivate, regulate and refine all the faculties of the human mind, whether belonging to the understanding, the imagination, or the heart. And first, with regard to the understanding.

It is generally supposed that the people of any country in possession of a copious language, and a multitude of books, will of course acquire a proportional fund of knowledge: whereas those very circumstances may prove the most fruitful source of error, and be the means of introducing an infinity of false opinions, and vain knowledge, far worse than total ignorance. For it is not the use of a multitude of words that will give a just way of thinking, but the right use of them; and this can be obtained no other way, but by a careful and diligent examination into their precise meaning and import. Words, in the intellectual commerce of mankind, serve the same purpose that coins do in traffic; and whoever does not know the exact value of each,

each, will never be able to settle his accounts properly.

From the neglect of such examination chiefly it is, that numberless disputes in conversation, and controversies in writing, are carried on without ever coming to a period; for they would generally be found to take their rise from the several combatants making use of the same terms, though not exactly in the same sense; and there are few which might not speedily be ended, only by making each disputant define the terms about which the controversy arose, or which were improperly used in the course of the argument.

Nothing can be more ill-founded, than the generally received opinion, that we of course become masters of our mother tongue, by conversation and books, without farther pains or study: and it is astonishing how such an opinion could prevail, so notoriously contradicted by matter of fact.

Among our numerous army of authors, how few are there who are allowed to write English correctly; and how much fewer who speak it with any any degree of accuracy?

accuracy? The reason assigned for not studying it, that of its being the vernacular tongue, is of all others the strongest that can be offered why we should give more application to it, and examine it with greater attention, than any other; because, from the very mode of obtaining the use of it, all that is faulty, inaccurate, and erroneous, finds as easy an admission, as what is pure and correct; and where there is no standard to refer to, the one will pass muster as readily as the other.

When we consider that skill in that language which is in constant daily use both in speaking and writing, is of more importance to a native of this country, than a knowledge of all the other languages in the world; and that we might obtain a perfect mastery of it in half the time, and with half the pains employed in acquiring that of any other, it is wonderful to think, that to this hour so necessary a branch of education should never have been thought of. If any inhabitant of the country should wholly neglect his farm, his kitchen-garden, and orchard, suffering them to be over-run with noxious weeds and brambles, to the
destruction

destruction of all useful grain, plants, and fruit; and at the same time pride himself upon his orangery, and collection of exotics, supported at a great expence, though they can never turn to any account; how should we laugh at his absurdity! yet this is the very method pursued in our whole course of Education, for cultivating the nobler farm, that of the human mind.

There is such an intimate connection between words and ideas, language and knowledge, that whatever fault or deficiency there may be in the one, necessarily affects the other. The mind does not view its ideas (if I may be allowed the expression) with its naked eye, but, for the most part, through the medium of words, as through a glass; it is therefore of great moment that the glass be clear, polished, and free from blemish; as every imperfection there, will of course be transferred to the objects viewed through it. Should it therefore be the case of any country, that an infinite number of books were read there, and but a very small quantity of real knowledge obtained; that there should be much speaking, and little understanding; that disputes upon all manner of

topics should be carried on, without ever coming to an end; it would not follow that the intellectual faculties of such a people were naturally inferior to those of others, as the whole might be solved by considering the state of their language. So far as that is obscure, or ill understood, so far must the knowledge acquired through it be confused or erroneous. And when we consider what little care is taken to come at an accurate knowledge of one, the most copious, and, in its present neglected state, the most difficult to be well understood of any in the world—there will be no occasion to wonder, that we should be the most unsettled in our notions, and the most divided in our opinions, of any people upon earth. And if our actions and conduct in life are necessarily influenced by our notions and opinions, it follows, that where the latter are wrong, the former cannot be right. Since, therefore, a rectitude of conduct, depends on a right way of thinking; and a right way of thinking, in a great measure, upon an accurate knowledge of language; there cannot be an object of greater importance to society, than to make the study of that

that language which is in general use, a chief part of the education of youth.

Perhaps it may be thought by some, that too much time has been employed in labouring a point sufficiently clear; and the necessity of studying our own language is so apparent, that it does not stand in need of any argument to support it: but prejudices of education are, of all others, the most hard to be removed; nor is it an easy task, to establish a doctrine in opposition to universal practice: for, though all are ready to assent to the truth of the position in the abstract, yet there is scarce any one who will bring it home to himself. There is hardly an individual who does not think that he of course acquires a knowledge of his mother tongue, and who is not confident that he perfectly understands the meaning of the words he uses. The cause of this general error is thus admirably set forth by Locke, in Chap. 10. B. 3. of his Essay.

“Men having been accustomed from their cradles, to learn words, which are easily got and retained, before they know or had formed the complex ideas to which they are annexed, or which were to be found

found in the things they were thought to stand for, they usually continue to do so all their lives; and, without taking the pains necessary to settle in their minds determined ideas, they use the words for such unsteady and confused notions as they have, contenting themselves with the same words other people use; as if their very sound constantly carried with it the same meaning. This, though men make a shift with in the ordinary occurrences of life, where they find it necessary to be understood, and therefore they make signs till they are so; yet this insignificancy in their words, when they come to reason concerning either their tenets or interest, manifestly fills their discourse with abundance of empty unintelligible noise and jargon; especially in moral matters, where the words, for the most part, standing for arbitrary and numerous collections of ideas, not regularly and permanently united in nature, their bare sounds are often only thought on, or at least very obscure and uncertain notions annexed to them. Men take the words they find in use among their neighbours; and that they may not seem ignorant what they stand for,

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use them confidently without much troubling their heads about a certain fixed meaning; whereby, beside the ease of it, they obtain this advantage, that, as in such discourses they seldom are in the right, so they are as seldom to be convinced that they are in the wrong; it being all one to go about to draw those men out of their mistakes, who have no settled notions, as to dispossess a vagrant of his habitation, who has no settled abode."

When we consider for what a length of time all mankind were in the dark with regard to this subject: that the first who attempted to open their eyes, and let in light upon it, was the great Mr. Locke; that he himself had been so far blinded by the general prejudice, as to acknowledge ingenuously that he had made a considerable progress in his noble essay on the human understanding, before he thought any consideration of words was at all necessary to the elucidation of his subject, and yet, that he found it impossible to proceed with any prospect of success, till he had written an entire book upon the use and abuse of words, which he had before looked upon
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to be utterly needless* : I say when all this is considered, it will perhaps be thought that this doctrine cannot be too strongly enforced. It is a doctrine which Mr. Locke, in his treatise on education, frequently inculcates by the most powerful arguments ; and though the truth of it has been established beyond a possibility of doubt, yet has it hitherto been productive of no good effect, for want of some method to have it reduced to practice ; from which alone any advantage can be derived from it to society.

Hitherto I have considered the ill consequences of the little care we take of our written language in its dead state ; but much more fatal have been the effects of our to-

* His words are these : “ I must confess, then, that when I first began this discourse of the understanding, and a good while after, I had not the least thought that any consideration of words was at all necessary to it. But when, after having passed over the original and composition of our ideas, I began to examine the extent and certainty of our knowledge, I found it had so near a connection with words, that unless their force and manner of signification were first well observed, there could be very little said clearly and pertinently concerning knowledge.” B. iii. Chap. 9. Sect. 21.

tal neglect of the living speech: in this, following the custom of all barbarous countries, in spite of the noble examples set before us in the more civilized states. We know that in Greece and Rome the cultivation of the living speech was the chief object in the education of youth; and the art of elocution ever held a superiour rank to all others.

This art took it's rise in Greece, where it was carried to the highest degree of perfection; and thence transplanted to Rome, it flourished eminently in that congenial soil of freedom, while the Republic subsisted; but decayed together with the decline of liberty, and, with the loss of that, totally perished; nor has it since been revived, at least so as to resemble its former

* As this art has been utterly unknown in the British dominions, so there is no word in the language peculiarly adapted to give a clear idea of it. The word *Elocution* has therefore been adopted as having the nearest affinity to it; and it is here used in the same sense as the *Pronunciatio* of the Romans; thus defined by Cicero — "*Pronunciatio est vocis & vultus & gestus moderatio cum venustate.*" Elocution is the just and graceful management of the voice, countenance, and gesture in speaking.

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state, in any part of the globe. Of all countries in the world, Great Britain seems the best calculated, from the nature of its constitution, to restore it to its pristine rank; and yet, of all the civilized nations in Europe, it has been the most backward in making any attempts towards it. This has been owing to a fatal error in our system of education, which has turned the attention of all its inhabitants, wholly to the written language, to the utter neglect of that which is spoken. To trace the cause of this, it will be necessary to look back into the state of this country, at the time of the revival of the Greek and Roman literature. The Gothick spirit of our ancestors which had long been engaged in various struggles for liberty, had, a little before that period, been almost subdued, and yielded in a great measure to the will of a despot. Another tyrant, at the head of the Church, lorded it over their minds. In such a state of affairs, the powers of speech could have been of no farther use, than to serve the common purposes of life; and therefore must have remained uncultivated, as in all barbarous countries, and held in little estimation.

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But it was not so with regard to letters. The policy of the Church of Rome had confined the knowledge and use of these to the Clergy; and rude and barbarous as the Monkish Latin then was, it still gave a pre-eminence to that Order, over an ignorant laity, who could neither read nor write; and who, looking upon these as the highest of human accomplishments, bowed down with reverence to those who possessed them, as to beings of a superior class.

To keep up this blind veneration, the service of the Church was in Latin, a language which the congregation did not understand, and therefore it was of no moment in what manner it was delivered. The laws, too, were in the same language, of which the Clergy were the sole interpreters. With this predilection in favour of letters, no wonder their attachment to them increased, when the languages of old Greece and Rome had, as it were, a resurrection from the tombs, in which they had so long lain buried. But this may be considered only as raising up, not a revival of the dead. They were dug out as mummies; beautiful, indeed, in form and shape, but there wanted
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the Promethean fire of elocution to give them life and motion. In this dead state only could they be examined, for they had no voice. All their treasures were presented to the eye; the eye-language of course obtained dominion over that addressed to the ear; and the noble instrument furnished us by nature in the vocal tongue, was supplanted by the silent pen. In order to partake of the newly discovered treasures, all the world applied themselves eagerly to the study of letters. From that period the minds of men took a wrong bias. Their whole attention was employed in the artificial, to the utter neglect of the natural language. Letters, not sounds, writing, not speech, became the general care; and, from that hour to this, mankind have been so entirely absorbed in the one, that they have never once turned their thoughts toward the other.

That our ancestors, considering the extreme poverty of their own at that time, should have given a preference to the dead languages, which opened to them an immense hoard of knowledge, the choice collection of ages, among the wisest and most civilized

civilized nations that ever inhabited this globe, is not at all surprising. That they should neglect the powers of speech, in its then barbarous state, when eloquence was of little or no use, and apply themselves wholly to the cultivation of written composition, particularly in Latin, then considered not only as the highest accomplishment, but the surest passport to the temples of fame and fortune, is also no matter of wonder. But, that the same system should remain to this day, when a mastery of our own language is of more importance to a native of this country, than that of all others in the world; and when the powers of speech are called for in all public transactions, and pre-eminence in elocution is the sure road to fame, rank, and preferment, might well astonish any one who had not sufficiently weighed the force of custom: yet, great as the power of custom is, it is not likely that in this case it could have prevailed for such a length of time, had not our ancestors, out of a careful regard to posterity, made those numerous and liberal endowments of schools and colleges, in order to perpetuate that course of education,

tion, which to them appeared the best that could be contrived, and certainly was so in their days. If we charge them with want of foresight in settling such establishments to perpetuity, without making allowance for the many changes which time, and the natural mutability of human affairs, were likely to produce; much more strongly may the argument be retorted on their posterity; who, when an entire revolution was brought about in our civil and religious institutions, new scenes of arts and sciences opened, new customs and manners adopted, were so far blind to the dictates of common sense, as to make no change in the course of Education suitable to the change of times.

Thus, in the days of our ancestors, did the artificial, the written language, the invention of man, supplant that of nature, of speech, the gift of God; and in that state has it remained even to this day. To this deaf and dumb idol have temples been erected through the land; an order of priesthood established, with suitable stipends, to observe its rights; to make all heads bow down before it, and offer daily hecatombs at its altar from the teeming womb

womb of the press. While the divine eloquence, of the loveliest form, graceful in all her motions, tuneful in her voice; the delight of all eyes and ears, the charmer of the fancy, the mistress of every heart; was wholly excluded from that realm of freedom, in which alone she could have taken delight to dwell.

The great benefits which would result to the rising and future generations, from a due cultivation of the two kinds of language, the natural and artificial, the spoken and the written, must be obvious to men of the most common capacity from what has been already laid before them. I shall now endeavour to point out the only method by which a mastery of both may be obtained. For this purpose, the first principle I lay down, is, that the whole process of teaching them, should be attended with pleasure to the senses, and delight to the mind; the surest means of sweetening labour, and encouraging perseverance in long and toilsome investigations: nothing of which is at all considered in the present mode. The whole art of reading, as it now stands, being a tedious, painful, and

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disgusting operation in it's process; and being directed to a wrong end, finally attended with disappointment.

To shew this in a clear light, let it be remembered, that the instrument used to cultivate all the nobler faculties of man, is language. Now there are two sorts of language in use; the one, spoken; the other, written. The one, manifested by the living voice; the other, by the dead letter. It has been generally supposed, that these two kinds are equally calculated to answer the same end; but upon the slightest view, the opinion will be found very erroneous; and on a closer examination, the difference between them will be immense. Now let us consider them in the first place, with regard to the two organs by which they are conveyed to the mind; hearing, and sight. To the living speech, when cultivated and brought to perfection, are annexed some of the highest delights that our nature is capable of receiving; no music can be more grateful to the ear, than a well proportioned and harmonious delivery. But words presented to the eye in the dead letter, can afford no pleasure to that organ. Thus, with regard

regard to the gratification merely of the senses, the disparity is at once obvious; and with respect to mental enjoyments, I shall hereafter shew, there can be no sort of comparison made between them; and yet, all our pains are employed about the one, without the smallest regard had to the other. In the mode of teaching to read, the eye-language seems to be the chief, or rather only object in view; to make the pupils spell, not pronounce properly. For the former, they have patterns to follow; for the latter, neither rules, nor method: and each master can only give such pronunciation as he has himself, which probably is vicious in a high degree. These poor drudges, who teach the first rudiments of speech, know nothing of the nature of articulate sounds, nor can cure any faulty habits, such as stuttering, mumbling, lisping, &c. Their sole end is to enable the pupil to spell and pronounce words at sight, no matter in what manner, in order to prepare them for the grammar-school, whither they are sent *with all their imperfections on their heads*. The master there neither knows how, nor thinks it part of his province,

vince, to remedy this evil. Thus, all bad habits of utterance, contracted in early years, grow inveterate by time, and become incurable. Of the fundamental principles of a just delivery, such as a distinct articulation, right use of accent, due proportion of emphasis and pauses, these teachers have not the smallest idea; and instead of that variety, and nice discrimination of tones, which nature has annexed to all the emotions of the mind, exertions of the fancy, and feelings of the heart; they substitute in their places, artificial reading tones, consisting of a uniform elevation and depression of the voice in all sentences alike, disgusting to the ear, and subversive of the sense. Thus, after the labour of many years, all that is obtained, is, to utter words at sight, in unnatural tones, abuse of emphasis, wrong stops, and false cadences; by which means the faculties of speech are cramped and distorted; and all the powers of the mind, closely connected with them, partake of the infection. The famous Dr. Berkeley seems to have viewed this matter in its true light; when, in a pamphlet called the *Querist*, among others, he puts the

the following question—Whether half the learning and study of these kingdoms is not useless, for want of a proper delivery and pronunciation being taught in our schools and colleges?

Our attention being wholly confined to book learning, where we see nothing but words, has narrowed our conception of language at large, and deprived us of some of its most extensive benefits; for by this means all our ideas of language are limited to the knowledge and use of words only: and I think I may venture to appeal to every reader, whether this is not the generally received opinion? and whether he, who perfectly understands the meaning of the words, and has the right use of them at command, is not thought to be a master of language? Yet if it can be shewn that this is only a part of language; if it can be shewn that it has other parts absolutely necessary to the communication of what passes in our minds, which cannot possibly be done by mere words; and that too, in order to answer some of the noblest and most important ends of such social communication; it must be allowed, that our

pains ought not to be confined to that part only, but should proportionably be extended to those other parts, which are equally necessary, and, in their consequences, of more importance.

Language, in the full extent of the word, signifies the power of communicating all that passes in the mind of one man, to that of another. Thought and feeling make up the whole of man's internal perceptions. These are communicated by two species of language, utterly different, and independent of each other. Words make up the language of thought, or ideas; the language of feeling, or inward emotion, is composed of tones, looks, and gestures.

Words are, by compact, the marks or symbols of our ideas; and this is the utmost extent of their power. Did nothing pass in the mind of man but ideas, to manifest the thoughts and operations of such a mind, would not be beyond the power of words; for this we find effected among us, in all matters where simple reason, and mere speculation are concerned, as in the investigations of mathematical truths. But as there are other things which pass in the mind of
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man, beside ideas; as he is not wholly made up of intellect, but on the contrary, the passions and the fancy compose great part of his complicated frame; as the operations of these are attended with an infinite variety of emotions, both in kind and degree; it is clear, that, unless there be some means found of manifesting those emotions, all that passes in the mind of one man, cannot be communicated to that of another. Now, as in order to know what another knows, an exact transcript of the ideas which pass in the mind of one man, must be made by sensible marks in the mind of another; so, in order to feel what another feels, the emotions which are in the mind of one man, must be rendered perceptible to that of another by sensible marks. This never can be done, by the use of words only; for mere words, though delivered with all the clearness of the understanding, however convincing to the judgment, can have no power over the passions, nor excite feeling: while tones, looks, and gesture, though irregularly used, have a very powerful influence over the human mind. Of this we have daily instances

stances in the little effects produced by pulpit elocution, from very rational discourses, delivered coldly from notes; and, on the other hand, in the extraordinary impressions made by the wild uncultivated oratory of the Methodist preachers; which has given them such advantage over the regular clergy, in seducing such numbers of their flocks from them. For, were they to read their nonsense in the same dull unaffecting way, it is to be presumed there are few of mankind, such ideots, as to become their followers; for who would not prefer sense to nonsense, if they were clothed in the same garb? But by making use of the language of nature, the language of emotion, they excite enthusiastic feelings in their auditors; and however irregular and void of grace their manner may be in the use of such tones, looks, and gesture, yet has it still great force in persuading people they are in earnest. The very worst abuse of those signs, is preferable to a total want of them; as it has at least a stronger resemblance to nature. There is no emotion of the mind, which nature does not make an effort to manifest, by some of those signs;

signs; and therefore a total suppression of them, is, of all other states, apparently the most unnatural. And this, it is to be feared is too much the case of the pulpit elocution in general, in the Church of England: which arises wholly from the very erroneous method in which the clergy were originally taught and afterwards practised in the art of reading.

The same cause has produced similar effects in the senate-house, the bar, and all other places where the powers of speech are exerted. They speak as if they were reading, or as a book would do, could it be supposed to speak. Some, like automata, devoid of life or motion, in a monotone, or in a uniform, tiresome cant. Others, who attempt any thing like animation, and endeavour to use the language of emotions, deliver their words in such false and discordant tones, and accompany them with such awkward, unmeaning gesture, and grimace of countenance, as would render them objects of disgust or ridicule to more enlightened auditories. But all deficiencies in this respect are so general, that they are not perceived, or are easily passed

passed over. *Defendit numerus—veniam
petimusque damusque vicissim.*

When we reflect, that not only every thing which is pleasurable, every thing which is forcible and affecting in public speaking, but also the most material points necessary to a full and distinct comprehension even of the meaning of what is uttered, depend upon a right use of the living speech ; it may well astonish us to think, that so essential an article should in a civilized country, be wholly neglected ; nay worse, that our youth should not only be uninstructed in the true principles of elocution, but in what little art there is used, they should be early perverted by false rules, utterly repugnant to those which nature has clearly pointed out to us. In consequence of which, all the noble ends, which might be answered in a free state, by a clear, lively, and affecting elocution, are, in a great measure lost to us. And how can it be otherwise, when we have given up the vivifying, energetic language, stamped by God himself upon our natures, for that which is the cold, lifeless work of art, the invention of man ; and bar-
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tered that which can penetrate the inmost recesses of the heart, for one which dies in the ear, or fades upon the sight?

The great superiority of the living speech over the written language, in many essential points, has been made sufficiently clear. When we consider farther, that every human being has occasion to use it each day and hour of his life; and that a clear, correct, and pleasing utterance would be highly useful, as well as ornamental, in all social intercourse; on the contrary, that few ever have occasion for writing, except on matters of business, or epistolary correspondence; and that not one in ten thousand ever arrives at such perfection in literary composition, as to derive either fame or profit from it: when we reflect also, that every improvement made in the living speech, will of course be communicated to the written language, as surely as the shadow follows the substance; and, on the other hand, that the utmost perfection of composition by the pen, can never meliorate the tongue, or at all improve the faculties of speech; it being a common observation, that the most bookish men are frequently

frequently remarkable, either for taciturnity, or a bad delivery—surely! surely! we have begun at the wrong end, and acted in direct opposition to reason and common sense. What have we then to do, but to desert the erroneous course in which we set out, and go back to that which nature herself has pointed out to us? To bestow our chief pains upon the culture of the living tongue, the archetype; and consider the written language, its type, in a subordinate light.

Suppose, therefore, a new method of teaching the art of reading with propriety and grace, by masters duly qualified, were opened to us—let us see what the immediate consequences would be, and what improvement it would make in the education of our youth. I have laid it down as a fundamental maxim, that the whole process of teaching this art, should be attended with pleasure to the senses, and delight to the mind; as the surest means of sweetening labour, and encouraging perseverance in long and difficult pursuits. As to the sensual pleasure, I have advanced, that no music can be more grateful to the ear than
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a well proportioned and harmonious delivery. Let those who have heard Mrs. Siddons, deny this if they can. To arrive at this, it will be necessary, that in early age, the as yet uncorrupted ear should be cultivated by skillful masters, in the same way as in music, so as to be able to distinguish all the nice discriminations of sound employed in speech, at a time when the flexible organs of the voice may easily be bent to all the various modulations whereof it is susceptible. Taught in this way, the pupils, hearing their own well proportioned notes, in their very nature pleasing, and doubly so, as coming from themselves, will from the beginning take delight in reading: but afterwards, when the pleasure which this will afford to the mind also shall be taken in, they will advance with renovated ardour; for, upon a sufficient progress made in that art, they will find it impossible to read with propriety, without perfectly understanding what they read. This will of course introduce an enquiry into the signification of words, and of their true meaning, when combined in sentences. Thus, every advance in reading,

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will likewise be an advance in knowledge; and the pupils will be encouraged to proceed, from the double satisfaction this will afford, both to the ear and the understanding. When at last they come to works of a more refined and elegant sort, produced from a lively imagination, or a feeling heart, they will find that these can never be delivered with due grace and energy, unless adorned and enforced by all the various modulations of voice which they require, and in which indeed their very essence consists. Thus the rhetorical art will be restored to life as among the ancients: no longer imprisoned in books, and swathed like an Egyptian mummy, powdered over with hieroglyphics; but moving gracefully abroad, to charm the senses, and captivate the hearts of all beholders. Among the moderns, all the treatises on that subject refer wholly to written language, not to speech, by which its nature is altogether changed; as its very name implies the art of speaking; and the lectures of the present Rhetoricians, resemble those of a surgeon anatomizing a corpse, and leaving nothing but a skeleton behind. This practice has been well

well ridiculed by the author of Hudibras, where he says—

For all our Rhetoricians rules,
But teach us how to name their tools.

And Mr. Locke, to the same effect, speaking of the manner in which our youth are instructed in that art, wisely remarks—
“ They have been taught rhetoric, but yet never taught how to express themselves handsomely with their tongues and pens in the language they are always to use ; as if the names of the figures that embellish the discourse of those who understand the art of speaking, were the very art and skill of speaking well. This, as all other things of practice, is to be learned, not by a few, or a great many rules given, but by exercise and application according to good rules, or rather patterns, till habits are got, and a facility of doing it well.”

In the last stage of reading, when they come to a recital of our poetic compositions ; what a new field of delight will be here opened to them ? Having obtained a complete knowledge of our prosody, by being first instructed in the theory of our
numbers

numbers, now enveloped in utter darkness; and afterwards well exercised in the practical part, now miserably perverted; they will be able to display to the delighted ears of their auditors, all the charms of poetic composition, arising from the melody, variety, and expressions of their numbers. They will then truly give the poet's song in all its due proportion of time and tone; whereas, at present, each reader sets his own tune to the poet's numbers; and however false or discordant that may be, he can never be convinced of his error, as he is perfectly satisfied with his own performance. *Non cuiquam injucundum quod cantat ipse*—No man's song is unpleasing to his own ear. The vanity of human nature is not more conspicuous in any one instance than in this; for though every one is pleased with his own chant, he readily finds fault, and is disgusted with that of others.

Thus, in their progress to perfection in this art, would the youth, so trained, attain a thorough knowledge of their own tongue in both its component parts of sense and sound. Then would they be able to
write

write exercises in pure and correct English, and arrange their words, both in poetry and prose, in such a way, as to render their meaning clear to the understanding, and their sound charming to the ear. As these exercises, should all be publicly repeated by their several writers, what a different sense of delight must they have in exhibiting the offspring of their brain all alive in their full beauty, to their admiring school-fellows, instead of submitting them, in the dead letter, to the cold and solitary eye of a (perhaps) tasteless and rigid master! and what an emulation must this not excite among their youthful hearers, to excel both in composition and delivery! By the constant exercise of the organs of speech in this just and forcible manner, all that they read would be deeply stamped on the mind by the vivid powers of the living voice; while the most part of that which finds entrance only through the eye, is as evanescent as successive shadows shewn by a *camera obscura*. Thus would they obtain a command of words and fluency of expression; and when they entered into life, finding themselves at all times

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supplied

supplied with a sufficient quantity of ready cash in the intellectual commerce of mankind, they would seek out company, and take delight in society, in order to display the wealth of their minds to view. Their social passions, being thus constantly exercised, would become predominant, and in time revive that public spirit, without which no free state can long subsist, now almost annihilated by that vile spirit of selfishness which pervades the whole land. Nothing has contributed more to the propagation of this fordid passion, the bane of every great and good principle, than the ascendancy which the written language has obtained over the spoken. In consequence of which, the powers of speech in private, and of elocution in public, are so contracted or distorted, that few can reap either pleasure or profit from them. Men therefore, in general, have recourse to books, both for instruction and entertainment. This sort of entertainment is in its own nature a selfish one, as the exercise is performed alone, and the reader has no one to participate of his satisfaction. Nor is there a greater enemy to facility of utterance,

rance, than a habit of silent reading; or which more disqualifies persons from making a figure in conversation. Hence the bookish man, finding that he cannot express himself before company, in a manner pleasing to them, or satisfactory to himself, avoids society, and retires to his study; where he indulges himself in thinking, to the utter starving of all his other faculties. Though in this way he may lay in a large fund of knowledge, yet it is locked up in his own brain, as a miser's hoard in his chest; for his neighbours can be no farther benefited by it, than as he is able to manifest it in discourse.

Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc, sciat alter. And to whatever degree the understanding may be thus improved, yet, though it be the first, as it is not the only part of the mind, since the imagination and the passions occupy a large portion of it; the proper exercise and regulation of these are of the utmost importance to society; not only with regard to all the most refined and constant pleasures, which our nature is capable of enjoying, but also with respect to morals. For had men the power

at all times of furnishing to themselves and others, the exquisite pleasures arising from the elegant exertions of fancy, and from the humane and generous sensibilities of the heart; pleasures, which, far from cloying, always increase by enjoyment, and which are ever attended with the delightful sense of self-approbation; men would not waste so much of their time in brutal and sensual gratifications; which in the enjoyment are ever unsatisfactory, are reflected on with disgust, and often with remorse.

All the highest delights, arising from the exercise of man's nobler faculties, are comprised in the single article of a forcible and graceful elocution: and all the powers of the fancy, all the feelings of the heart, as well as the most animated efforts of the understanding, are to be exercised, so as to attain their full strength, and shaped, so as to obtain their perfect beauty, by that alone; and thus strengthened and adorned, are to be manifested to others only in that way. Of the truth of this I shall produce but one pregnant proof. Who is the first object of universal admiration to the natives of these islands? the united voice of three kingdoms will

will answer—*The Siddons*. And to what does she owe this? Certainly to nothing but the wonderful perfection to which she has brought the art of elocution. Is there any one of the least sensibility who has seen her, that will not acknowledge the pre-eminence of that art over all others, in its power of captivating the senses, charming the fancy, and moving the inmost soul? Is there any one who will now deny the wonderful impressions made on the mind of man by the language of nature, unsophisticated by the tricks of art, and stripped of the fantastic ornaments and false-colouring laid on by the pencil of fancy? O ye of judgment and feeling, who have been her auditors!—I call upon you to say, whether, in the whole round of other arts, invented for the amusement of man, you ever experienced such a home-felt delight, as from the performance of this one woman. Has she not in their turns, like an enchantress, roused every passion of the soul? Has she not quelled your hearts with grateful terror, or melted them down into soft pity? Who among you, returning from these pathetic lectures, have not found yourselves

I am afraid this is overdone

more humanized, more inclined to do actions of kindness and charity. Good God! if our clergy were but masters of this art, if they could thus sway the affections of their congregations, how might they spread the chief precept, and main object of our holy religion, Christian charity and brotherly love, throughout the land! How might they bring about a general reformation, by thus checking the progress of that sordid principle, selfishness, the nourisher of every vice; and giving vigour to that noble one, benevolence, the source of every virtue.

All men of candour and understanding, who have turned their thoughts to this subject, are ready to allow that nothing could contribute more to the improvement of education, than the introduction and establishment of these studies upon a solid foundation; and that if a way were opened for the attainment of a perfect knowledge of the English language, both in it's grammatical and rhetorical parts, there is no parent who would not gladly embrace the opportunity of giving their children such useful and ornamental accomplishments; but

but among these, a general doubt has arisen about the practicability of such a plan.

So strong has been the prejudice of those who have applied themselves solely to the study of the written language, that they think it impossible that elocution should be taught as an art by any regular system; and this has been gravely maintained by many sages, though conversant with ancient authors; in some of the most celebrated of whom, particularly Cicero and Quintilian, they may find it set down, that it was the most favourite art both at Athens and Rome; in which all the liberal youth of those two famous cities were constantly instructed from their earliest years, by able Rhetoricians; whose profession was held in the highest estimation, and whose rewards far exceeded those bestowed on all other masters put together. *What has been may be.* But this matter is now put beyond all possibility of doubt. In his several works upon that subject, Mr. Sheridan has laid open the whole mystery of the art, from the first simple elements of speech, to their most extended combinations;

nations ; and has laid down a method of teaching it, upon as sure grounds, and with equal certainty of success, as any other art as now taught. This being granted, the next step is to point out the means by which it may be the most speedily and effectually established and propagated.

To the introduction of any new art into a country, two things are essentially necessary ; and these are—Method—and Masters. No masters can give instruction upon any sure grounds, without method ; and no method can be of much avail without the assistance of masters ; particularly in arts which have sounds for their basis, such as music and elocution ; where the voice of the master is absolutely necessary to illustrate precept, and his example wanted to direct just practice. The method, as has been shewn ; is ready to our hands, and masters will not be wanting, upon due encouragement given. For this purpose, let a Public School be opened, under the sanction of Parliament, for the instruction of youth from the first rudiments of speech, to the utmost extent of a school education. The first necessary step will

will be to procure a sufficient number of preceptors, capable of teaching according to the new method. There can be no doubt but that under such public sanction, attended for a time with some sure emoluments, but that many candidates will offer themselves, for the employment, out of whom may be selected those whose natural talents may best qualify them for it, to be afterwards instructed in the method of teaching it, by the inventor of the art. The principal object of this school will be to teach the whole of the English language, both in its living, and dead state; the former, as delivered to the ear by the organs of speech; the latter, as submitted to the eye by written or printed letters. In doing this let the living speech be restored to it's due rank, as being the original; and the written language reduced to it's subordinate state, as being only the copy. For this purpose let the first care be to give a clear and distinct articulation to letters and syllables of which words are composed; and afterwards a just pronunciation of the words themselves. So essentially necessary are the utmost care and precision

precision in this elementary part, that whatever fault or imperfection may remain there, will infect the whole of speech ever after. From a conviction of this truth Mr. Sheridan has formed a new primer for the use of children, even from the beginning of their *a b c*—in which he has also pointed out to masters the way of teaching according to this new method. Thus has he laid a solid foundation for the whole superstructure to be built upon it. Where this method is exactly followed, all the usual imperfections of speech, such as indistinctness, mumbling, lisping, stammering, stuttering &c. will be prevented or cured. A distinct articulation, and just pronunciation of words being thus secured, as the basis of a good delivery, the next step is to read sentences with propriety. Here the pupils are to be instructed in the nature and use of accent, of emphasis, stops or pauses, in the various inflections and management of the voice, according to the method laid down in his *Art of Reading*.

This mode of learning to read will be peculiarly useful to the natives of this country,

country. In the first place, they will be taught the right pronunciation of all English words according to the practice of the more polished natives there, and no longer be distinguished from them by their peculiar dialect. In the next, they will get rid of that disgusting tone, called the Irish brogue, which pervades every sentence they utter, and renders them a perpetual subject of ridicule to all English hearers. For it would be impossible to arrive at any perfection in the true art of reading, without first banishing all unmeaning adventitious tones, to introduce in their room only such notes and changes of the voice, as the sense in the passages so read require. And when a right habit of reading is obtained in this way, and the ear of the learner made sensible of the disagreeableness of the adventitious tones belonging to the brogue, he will avoid the latter, and introduce the former only into his common discourse.

During their progress in this, let them be taught to write; and when they are able to read sentences fluently, and to copy them in a plain legible hand, then let them enter upon English Grammar; which should

should be their only study till they have rendered themselves complete masters of all its fundamental and essential parts. During this time their daily exercises should be, reading aloud, copying certain passages from the books they are reading, and reciting these from memory. In this way the two species of language will be carried on together, and afford mutual light and assistance to each other. Then let them proceed to study English writers only, beginning with the easiest, such as are adapted to their raw understandings, and advancing by degrees, in proportion to the growth and improvement of their several capacities, to those of a superior and more refined sort. During their whole progress let Mr. Sheridan's Dictionary be constantly in their hands, to be consulted by them wherever a word occurs, of whose right pronunciation they are not sure, and whose meaning they do not comprehend. In order to keep alive in their memories all they have learned of grammar, let a portion of each day's lesson be selected, which they shall be obliged to parse, in the same way now practiced in

in Latin ; that is, to resolve each sentence into it's constituent parts of speech, and shew their mutual relation to each other. In this whole course it should be the office of the master to point out any grammatical errors, improprieties, or inaccuracies, that may occur in the authors they are reading, and which abound in many of those esteemed good writers, and from which even our most celebrated are not entirely free.

To the age of nine, their reading should be confined wholly to prose, and then they may be taught the elements of prosody, and the rules of the simpler species of versification ; that the ear, as yet uncorrupt, may be trained so as to discern the due proportion both of time and tone : and the flexible organs of speech be tuned to a true modulation of poetic numbers. Here then in addition to the exercise of declaiming in prose, may be introduced sometimes that of reciting select pieces of poetic composition, such as may suit the capacities of the several learners.

Thus prepared, at the age of ten, let them enter upon Latin. Already preinstructed in the principles and rules of general

ral grammar, in their mother tongue, they will be saved an infinite deal of trouble in learning these in an unknown language, according to the present most absurd method of teaching, that of—*ignotum per ignotius*. All that is necessary here will be only to point out those articles in which the Latin differs from the English grammar; and this may be done in so narrow a compass, that they may acquire, in the space of one month only, all that is useful or necessary to be known, previous to their entering upon the study of the Roman authors; whereas in the present way a year at least is employed for that purpose. Nor is less time necessary to answer the end proposed by such instruction, that of enabling the pupils to write correct exercises in Latin. But as it has been already shewn, that this end, even when obtained in the utmost perfection (which is hardly ever the case) can, in the present times, answer no one purpose in life, either of use or ornament, surely it ought no longer be pursued at the expence of so much time lost, during the most important season of life, never afterwards to be recovered,

covered, and which might be so much more beneficially employed in acquisitions of the utmost moment to their future welfare, and which might open the way to them to preferment, wealth, and fame.

It has been laid down as a maxim, that the only possible use of Latin and Greek, in the present times, is to be able to read the Classics in the original, so as to understand them clearly, and taste their peculiar beauties; and if the means of obtaining these ends, in the shortest time possible, are evidently pointed out, surely they ought to be carried into effect. It has been shewn that it is impossible either to understand the ancient authors well, or to have a just perception of their beauties, without first being acquainted and familiarized with authors of similar talents, and writings of a similar style in our own language. For it is through the medium of their own, that all the writings in foreign languages are viewed by learners, as they can not possibly understand them without translating them into their own. Now it is evident, that the translation will be either good or bad, in proportion to the knowledge

knowledge and command each has of his own language, in order to select the properest expressions, and adopt a correspondent phraseology to the peculiar idioms of that language. What is the method now taken with our young Tyros to enable them to perform this task? Why, as they came to the grammar school utterly unprepared in their own tongue, and provided with no other words but what are in common use, they can employ no other in their attempts to translate; but, for this, the master has a resource, in obliging them to have recourse to a dictionary, where opposite to the foreign word they find one set down as correspondent to it in English. This English word the boy probably has never heard of before, and understands it's meaning as little as that of the Latin; but he is sure to commit it to memory, and whenever the one word occurs, translate it into the other; and as the manner of teaching this way of translation, which is called construing, requires only that the pupil should be able to render each foreign word by an English one, such as he finds in his dictionary, without the least enquiry whether

whether he understands the passages so construed, this may be done effectually by the assistance of memory alone. And thus he may have read several books, and pass for a good Latin scholar, without having rightly understood any one passage throughout. But in this mode of verbal translation, whatever knowledge may be obtained of the literal meaning, the whole spirit of an author must evaporate, and all the beauties of an elegant and figurative style be lost.

It was for this reason that so much time has been allotted for the study of English previous to the commencement of Latin. But still the same principle which established this as a fundamental point, should continue to operate throughout the whole course afterwards. For this purpose, let the best translations of the classics always accompany the originals, and both be equally studied by the learners. This will not only be a vast saving of time and labour, but will make their progress in the acquisition of an unknown language, more easy and delightful. For, however well prepared, for

that season of life; they might be, by the previous study of English, and however qualified to translate themselves tolerably well from their own fund, yet there could be no sort of comparison between their juvenile and extemporaneous efforts, and the productions of a man of talents, advanced in life, who has employed much time and pains, to convey the meaning of his author in the best selection of words and phrases, and in transfusing the spirit of the original into the copy. Such writers may be considered in the light of opticians; and their translations, like glasses applied to the mental eye, by which the dim or short-sighted may not only see every thing in a clearer light, but discover many objects before invisible. In this way they will acquire a knowledge of Latin with ease and pleasure; at the same time they will get a clearer insight into the whole constitution of their own language, by constant comparison of the specific differences between the two; they will daily be adding to their stores of English expressions, so as to have a ready command of the *copia verborum*, without which no one can make
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any distinguished figure in extemporaneous speaking. And as that is the highest point of perfection to which elocution can arrive, and the most wanted in places of public debate, particularly in the two houses of Parliament, it may not be improper here to expatiate a little upon the methods to be pursued, in order to attain this end.

In the first place, as soon as boys shew that they perfectly know the grammatical part, the parts of speech in their several variations, and their connection with, and dependance on each other in syntax, let the custom of construing *verbatim* cease. Let the whole sentence be read, and it's meaning expounded in a liberal manner. This will necessarily demand a constant attention to the sense, and an equal exertion of the invention to find out suitable expressions to convey that sense. When a facility of doing this is obtained, let two or more sentences be joined together, and at last, according to the advances made, whole pages be read, and the substance of what they contain delivered in the same way. This will bring on a more vigorous exertion of the memory, the understanding,

and the invention. Of the memory, in retaining the order of so many successive sentences. Of the understanding, in not only perceiving the sense of each distinct passage, but also in observing the concatenation of the whole. And of the invention, in finding out proper expressions for those passages, whose distance has rendered the ideas contained in them more obscure, and therefore not so easy to be explained. In this way, the activity of the mind will be constantly employed in finding out and selecting suitable words and expressions; and practice in this, as in all other cases, will render it so easy, as to produce on all occasions a ready utterance, and fluency of speech. In aid of this extemporaneous mode of translating, where greater latitude is to be indulged, that they may acquire a habit of correctness also in style, let their written exercises be translations of their own from some Latin books, which are not the immediate object of their studies, and in which they should not be permitted to make use of any translation by other hands. In this way of studying Latin, they will have read more authors, and
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to much better purpose, in the space of two years only, than they can accomplish now in five, according to the present method. When they are sufficiently versed in that language, let them begin Greek; wherein, by pursuing the same method, they may make an equal proficiency, to the saving of much time and labour. Here a new field will be opened for comparing the three languages with each other, in regard to their constitutional differences; and thus a more distinct view will be obtained of the several perfections and imperfections in each, and a foundation laid for a more accurate and critical skill in them all, during their future progress.

While they are thus employed about the ancient, the two modern languages in most repute, the French and Italian, should by no means be neglected. It is in the prime of life, when the waxen mind most easily receives the deepest impressions, that the elementary parts of all such things as depend much upon memory, should be first inculcated. A certain portion of time should therefore be allotted, first to the French, and afterwards to the Italian mas-

ter. A just pronunciation will be then most easily communicated, and all the grammatical part safely stowed in the memory, ready at all times to be called forth for use. As to be able to converse in those living tongues, will be both useful and ornamental through life, that should be the chief object of the master in teaching, by making the pupils constantly converse with each other in French or Italian, while he is present with them, and correcting them where they commit any mistakes.

In the two last years, and not before, their written exercises should be of their own invention. Previously prepared as they have been, by storing their memories with abundance of clear ideas, and a command of suitable expressions culled from the best authors; habitually accustomed to give vent to these by the tongue, they will find no difficulty in committing them to paper by the pen. For whatever any one can say, he can certainly set down in writing. And when all the materials are thus ready at hand, great part of the labour of invention will be saved, now employed in a painful search after the materials themselves,

selves, as her principal task will be, only to select and arrange them. One of the weekly exercises should be an epistolary correspondence with such of their school-fellows, and upon such subjects, as they shall think proper; though critical remarks upon the several authors they are reading, may be sometimes recommended. But no exercises in verse should be compulsory upon those who have no talents for it. Wherever the seeds of poetry are sown by the hand of nature in the mind, they will spring up of course, as indigenous to the soil, and produce beautiful crops; but all attempts to force their growth in a soil not congenial to them, must end in disappointment. The best of these exercises should be selected, and on a fixed day in the week, be publicly delivered from the rostrum by their several writers, in presence of their relations and friends invited for that purpose. This early practice of speaking before numerous and mixed assemblies will prevent that *mauvaise honte*, which has tied up the tongues of perhaps some of the wisest men of the times, and deprived the community

community of many of it's ablest counsellors.

In order to promote still farther a facility of extemporaneous speech, during the last year, the practice of debating should be introduced. For this purpose problematical questions should be started upon subjects with which they were previously well acquainted, and timely notice given to the appointed disputants to prepare themselves, one for attack, the other for defence. After some time, those who have made the best figure in this way, may be allowed to pitch upon what subject they please, and to post up a thesis, in the old form of the schools,—*Quibuslibet opponentibus*. On such occasions premiums should be adjudged to the victors. Frequent practice in this way will not only give a ready command of words, but will bring forward, invigorate, and regulate the reasoning powers, so as to enable them to argue with perspicuity and force. There is no other species of exercise whatever, which will excite such an emulation in the youth, or such an ardour for conquest, as there is none in which all
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the nobler faculties of man, can at once be displayed to such advantage.

Such is the outline of a school proposed to be established on different principles, and pursuing very different ends from those, which, persisting uniformly in the same erroneous course, have, for centuries, misconducted each successive generation, and rendered them unqualified for all the nobler, as well as more useful pursuits of life. There are many other articles of less importance to be taken into this scheme; but as this is merely a sketch of the principal parts, it will not be necessary to point them out, till the whole plan be presented to view, with the outline filled up. It will then appear, that the course of studies above proposed, may be gone through before the young pupils shall have attained their fifteenth year.

Here I am tempted to finish this part with a passage from Milton, who in his plan of education, founded upon similar principles, concludes thus.—“ I doubt not but you shall have more ado to drive our dullest and laziest youth, our flocks and stubs, from the infinite desire of such a happy

happy nurture, than we have now, to hale and drag our choicest and hopefulest wits to that asinine feast of sow-thistles and brambles, which is commonly set before them, as all the food and entertainment, for their tenderest and most docible age."

Now let us examine what the state of the youth is at the same age, trained according to the present mode.

The whole object of the school-master is to prepare the boys for entering the college; and when they can stand a stated examination by the senior lecturer for that purpose, they are accordingly sent thither. And in what does this examination consist? It is expected that they should be able to construe such passages of some of the Roman and Greek Classics, as they have learned at school. The works of Horace, the bucolicks and georgicks of Virgil, with the first six books of the *Æneid*, are all that are requisite in Latin; and the dialogues of Lucian with the first six books of Homer's *Iliad*, in the Greek. Now though they are able (which however is not always the case) to construe such passages as have been imprinted on their memories by frequent

quent repetitions at school, yet so far are they from having any general or comprehensive knowledge of those languages, that if you open to them a passage in any author which they had not before studied, or any part of the same author which they had not before read, as for instance, in the last six books of the *Æneid*, or the last eighteen of Homer's *Iliad*, they are utterly at a loss.

Thus, after the drudgery of so many years, goaded on by the dread of punishment, in a constant course of disagreeable labour, without any degree of pleasure to soften it, or hope of seeing an end to it; all that the young scholars have attained, is, a poor smattering in the two dead languages. Of their own they know nothing but what is picked up by chance. They can neither speak nor write it with any degree of propriety or accuracy. As to speech, whatever imperfections or bad habits they may have contracted in utterance, must remain uncorrected, probably to the end of their lives. Originally corrupted by the vile method of teaching the art of reading, and afterwards confirmed in it by constant

constant practice in the same erroneous way, they can neither read aloud, nor deliver any passages from books with propriety, much less with grace. On the contrary, they are in general uttered with such discordant tones, wrong emphases, and false cadences, as must be highly disgusting to the hearers, were not the general ear, (equally corrupted) so familiarised to them, as to render their deformity imperceptible. And as to the written language, they are so little practised in their own, that they cannot even write a common letter so as to give pleasure to a correspondent; and with respect to their Latin exercises, whether in poetry or prose, they are, for the most part, puerile in the thoughts, and bald in the style. Or if here and there, something more correct or elegant should be seen, they are evidently borrowed from the authors they have read.

Purpureus late qui splendeat unus & alter

Assuitur pannus.

What has been here said is chiefly applicable to the common run of boys. Some there will always be, of superior talents, who

who, by their own exertions, will gain a comparative superiority over their school-fellows ; but all must, in a certain degree, partake of the imperfections, and fundamental errors of the original plan.

Now let the course, as above described, be compared with that previously proposed, and let common sense decide, which of the two is best adapted to prepare the youth for the farther pursuit of their studies in the college ; or to furnish them with such qualifications as may afterwards be of the greatest use and ornament to them when they enter into the world, in whatever station or profession they may be placed. The determination of this question, is a point of as great national importance, as ever was offered to the consideration of the public. Fortunately this country is in possession of one part of education, during a very important period of life, superior perhaps to any in the known world. I mean the four first years passed in the college, from the time of entrance to that of taking a bachelor's degree. During which space, whether we regard the course of studies to be pursued there, or the means
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of enforcing a close attention to that course, we shall find no parallel to it in any seminary of learning throughout Europe. None, where such a quantity of knowledge is to be obtained in an equal space of time; none, where the emulation of youth is so stimulated, by a most judicious distribution of rewards; or idleness discouraged, by such just and efficacious punishments. Honour is the sure attendant on the former, and disgrace on the latter. Nay so admirably framed is the plan of the public quarterly examinations, that it is impossible any one can get forward from class to class, so as to take a degree, without answering at least tolerably well at those several examinations; as from certain bad judgments given, on account of evident marks of idleness, they may either be stopped from mounting into a higher, or turned down into a lower class. In order to give due efficacy to these admirable institutions, it is evident that nothing can be of greater moment than that the previous part of school education should be exactly suited to that which is to follow, and so linked to the other, that the chain may be

be found complete, But the reverse of this is at present the case, and much of the time lost that might be more beneficially employed in academic studies, from the necessity the tutors are under of taking upon them the office of school-masters, in order to give their pupils such a competent knowledge of Latin and Greek as they ought to have brought with them from school, and certainly might by such a method of training there as has been proposed. Nothing could so effectually promote a close application to the several scientific branches of the college course, as a continuation there of the new studies previously carried on in the schools. A mastery of their own language would not only render their progress in philosophy infinitely more clear, certain, and consequently easy, but their avidity of all sorts of knowledge would increase in proportion to their ability of displaying it at all times, and upon all occasions, to the best advantage. Nor would the introduction of the art of elocution interfere in the least, or encroach upon the time necessary to the other branches of academic studies, as the students,

students, well grounded from their early years in the principles and practice of that art, would still continue their application to it as the amusement of their leisure hours, from the very delight attending every advance they should make in that most noble and pleasing of all exercises; and which would not suffer them to quit the pursuit, till they should have attained the utmost degree of perfection, which their natural talents would enable them to reach. To the pleasure attendant on the practice of this art, Cicero has borne a strong testimony, where he says—*Dicendi autem me non tam fructus & gloria quam studium ipsum, exercitatioque delectat.* That is —“ Not all the fruit and glory derived from elocution, give me such delight, as the study and exercise of the art itself.” All the encouragement necessary to be given at the college towards forwarding the perfection of this art, would be, to appoint stated times for the public recitation of such pieces of composition, whether in poetry or prose, as should be selected for that purpose; and for public disputations upon interesting subjects, with a few honorary

norary rewards, upon the more solemn occasions, distributed to the victors. It is hard to conceive, that in any other species of exercise whatsoever, the youth should be so emulous to excel, as when contending for pre-eminence in an art, wherein all the nobler powers of the mind, and all the gracefulness and dignity of the human form, are at once to be displayed before the eyes of admiring spectators. Surely there is no other situation in the world, where human nature is exhibited in so exalted a point of view.

The generous youth, thus trained, when they enter into the world, will find themselves qualified to make a figure in whatever line of life they may be placed. When those of a higher order should be called upon, (as Milton on a similar occasion expresses himself) “ to speak in parliament,
 “ or council, honour and attention would
 “ be waiting on their lips. There would
 “ then also appear in pulpits, other
 “ visages, other gestures, and stuff other-
 “ wise wrought, than what we now fit
 “ under, oft-times to as great a trial of
 H “ patience,

“ patience, as any other that they preach
 “ to us.”

When it is considered, that we have the same opportunities of displaying the powers of elocution, both in the senate house and at the bar, that the ancients had ; and have the same motives, those of acquiring power, fame and fortune, by excelling in that way, to incite us to it : when we reflect what a wide field for oratory is opened to us, utterly unknown to Greece or Rome, which pervades the whole British dominions, by the institution of preaching ; and that the number of the priesthood, who cannot properly discharge any part of their office without the cultivated powers of speech, is greater than the whole number of the citizens of Athens, at any given period : when it is considered farther, that all the police and business of the nation, in the several boards, bodies corporate, grand juries, petty juries, down to parish vestries, are discussed and settled by speech alone ; it is wonderful to reflect, that, in countries so circumstanced, there never should have been

been any attempt made towards improving those faculties, on which the good order, and proper support of their several institutions so much depend. Especially when it is well known, that, on all these occasions, the ignorant, the impudent, and the loud, too often carry it against truth and justice; while modest sense and wisdom are silent, through the want of having been practised in speaking before numerous assemblies.

However obvious it may be to the most common understanding, that the greatest benefits would arise both to the community at large, and numberless individuals, from carrying the above proposed plan into execution, yet the author of it is far from thinking that it will make its way by virtue of its own intrinsic merit. He knows that there is no subject whatever which has such rooted and inveterate prejudices to encounter. He knows that the bulk of those who are advanced in life, thinking themselves too old to learn, will set their shoulders against any innovation, by which they expect to reap no benefit; and who, with regard to the advantages which might

thence result to the rising and future generations, may probably be of the same opinion with the Oxford fellow; who, upon some proposal made for the good of posterity, said, he would fain know first what had posterity done for us. And above all, he knows that establishments made at a very distant period, and suffered to remain unaltered by all the successive legislative bodies since that period, can never be effectually changed or new modeled by any power but that of the legislature alone. It was therefore with infinite satisfaction that he found this most interesting subject had at last, and for the first time, been laid before the Commons of Ireland; that the idea of it originated with government, and the first proposal made by a Minister, not a native of this country; but one whose sagacity discovered the chief source of the disorders under which we labour, and whose enlarged mind, free from the narrow views of too many of his predecessors in office, saw that the real interests of the two sister-kingdoms were so closely interwoven, that whatever affected the

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one, must be sensibly felt by the other. Under such auspices, the author of this little tract, began to hope that the execution of a plan, which had been the chief object of his life, and in his preparations for which he had employed many of his best years, might now be found practicable. He therefore quitted all other pursuits, and returned to offer his service to his native country. From which, though he had been driven by a most outrageous act of violence and cruelty, that in one night deprived him of the fruits of ten years incessant toil, to accomplish a point which he fondly hoped would have been of lasting benefit to the city of Dublin, and which he had just then almost brought to maturity; yet as he considered this act to be only the effect of the frenzy of party, whereof they soon repented, and have had ever since just cause to repent, it has never diminished in him that *amor patriæ*, which ought to glow in the breast of every good citizen. For this country did he originally form his plan, and in this country does he wish to execute it. He is willing to devote the
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few remaining years, which in the course of nature he may expect to live, to the accomplishment of this great work; and he hopes no time will be lost in making a commencement, as he well knows, that unless executed under his own immediate direction, it will never be carried on to any effectual purpose. If his plan should meet with due encouragement; if, after investigation, it should obtain the sanction of the legislature, he will then have no doubt of its success; and will lay before the public a more particular view of the measures to be taken in order to establish it on a solid and durable foundation, so as to spread, in no long space of time, the benefits to be derived from it throughout the realm. And he will be bold to say, that if such an establishment should take place, it would commence a new æra in the Parliamentary Annals of this kingdom; that the name of Orde, as first mover in this momentous affair, would be held in the highest reverence by a grateful posterity, enlightened through his means, and enjoying many of the chief blessings

blessings in life, unknown to their forefathers; and that it will throw a lustre round the period of the Duke of Rutland's Government, far superior to that of any of his predecessors in that high office.

T H E E N D.

E R R A T A.

P. 30, line 26, *For* acute *read* accurate.
— 64, — 7, — expressions — expressior.

